

Amdt. dated May 2, 2005
Reply to Office action of June 9, 2004

Serial No. 09/398,378
Docket No. BO999030
Firm No. 0036.0044

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-36 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 7, 13, 19, 25, and 31 have been amended. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. Applicants submit that the pending claims 1-36 are patentable over the art of record and allowance is respectfully requested of claims 1-36.

In paragraph 4, the Office Action rejects claims 1-36 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Stuart (U.S. Patent No. 6,466,935). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

With Applicants' invention, when the status column of a job is updated, the update is a triggering event that activates a trigger (e.g., Specification, page 7, lines 8-10). The trigger then executes a user defined function and passes the new status of the job to the user defined function (e.g., Specification, page 7, lines 10-11). This user defined function accesses a mapping to see which work process should work on a job using information (e.g., job ID) in a job status table (e.g., Specification, page 7, lines 15-17). The mapping maps an input status of a job to a work process (e.g., Specification, page 6, lines 26-28). Each work process will work on the jobs "sent" to it by the user defined function. In particular, a work process whose job status has changed is notified (e.g., called or sent a message) by the user defined function (e.g., Specification, page 7, lines 18-20). In response to the notification, the work process queries the job status table and gets job information, processes the job, and updates the status of the job in the jobs table (e.g., Specification, page 8, lines 22-24). Thus, each work process is independent of all other work processes in a workflow, and the user defined function/database has the information needed to process a job to completion. Work processes may be added, removed or changed by changing the mapping. Therefore, the invention provides an event-driven system in which, when one work process is done, the next work process is given the job immediately, without a need for a scheduler process polling the database at intervals to see which jobs need to go to which work process and without polling done by the work processes to see if they have any jobs to work on.

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In particular, Applicants' Specification at page 10, lines 25-27 describes that the input and output statuses defined for the work processes define the flow of jobs to and from the works. Also, a job status table is a data structure that describes the jobs.

Thus, with Applicants' invention, a database is capable of being a workflow engine. Applicants' invention is event driven and needs no scheduler process. A job is created and a status is set in the database for the new job. The database change will trigger an event to start the next work process in the workflow, and this continues until the job has completed its trip through the workflow. Routing information (i.e., the mapping of job status to work process to be assigned) is kept (and can be updated dynamically) by changing information in a database table. This information is used by the user-defined function to start the appropriate "next work process" for a job and hand it the job to be worked on.

Claim 1 describes generating, with a computing system, a signal when status for the job is changed from a first status to a second status in a job status table, and the signal is generated by an event trigger. The Stuart patent does not describe that a signal is generated by an event trigger when status for the job is changed.

In addition, claim 1 describes using a mapping to identify, with a user defined function, a single work process for processing the job based on the second status, wherein the second status is associated with the identified work process. The user defined function is invoked by the event trigger. The mapping maps an input status of a job to a work process. The Stuart patent does not describe that a user defined function identifies a single work process using a mapping. The Stuart patent describes a relational database table, but the relational database table is not a mapping that maps an input status of a job to a work process. For example, the table of FIG. 6 of the Stuart patent does not describe work processes and so cannot be used as a mapping.

Claim 1 also describes notifying, with the user defined function, the work process associated with the second status that one job had its status changed to the second status in response to the signal. The Stuart patent describes that the WFMS retrieves the highest priority

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work item by querying or polling the relational database tables (Col. 4, lines 41-43). On the other hand, the claimed invention describes that a user defined function notifies the work process that there was a change in status.

Claim 1 describes processing, with the work process, the job that had its status changed from the first status to the second status, wherein the work process queries the job status table to identify the job having the second status which is associated with that work process and to obtain job information in response to the notification. Again, the Stuart patent describes that the WFMS retrieves the highest priority work item by querying or polling the relational database tables (Col. 4, lines 41-43), but there is no description that the work process queries the job status table in response to the notification from a user defined function.

Thus, claim 1 is not anticipated by the Stuart patent. Independent claims 7, 13 19, 25, and 31 are not anticipated by the Stuart patent for at least the same reasons as were discussed with respect to claim 1.

Dependent claims 2-6, 8-12, 14-18, 20-24, 26-30, and 32-36 incorporate the language of independent claims 1, 13, and 25, respectively, and add additional novel elements. Therefore, dependent claims 2-6, 8-12, 14-18, 20-24, 26-30, and 32-36 are not anticipated by the Stuart patent for at least the reasons discussed with respect to independent claims 1, 13, and 25.

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Conclusion

For all the above reasons, Applicant submits that the pending claims 1-36 are patentable over the art of record. Applicants have not added any claims. Nonetheless, should any additional fees be required, please charge Deposit Account No. 09-0466.

The attorney of record invites the Examiner to contact her at (310) 553-7973 if the Examiner believes such contact would advance the prosecution of the case.

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